

California Department of Veterans Affairs



STRATEGIC PLAN

July 1, 2010 - June 30, 2015

DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

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My fellow Californians,

The Mission of the California Department of Veterans Affairs (CalVet) is "To serve California's veterans and their families." The attached Strategic Plan is our guide for the next five years in support of fulfilling our mission.

In drafting this plan, our focus was direct and to the point: How will the California Department of Veterans Affairs meet and exceed the expectations of California's veterans and their families? As we built on prior year's efforts, we improved our planning processes with a more structured look at how California's veterans perceive their needs—keeping with the spirit of General Omar Bradley, who stated during his tenure as the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs: "We are dealing with veterans, not procedures. With their problems, not ours."

The Department's Strategic Plan for 2010–2015 reflects Governor Schwarzenegger's vision for California's future and his great respect and appreciation for our veterans and their sacrifices for the nation. But it is also robust enough to carry the Department through the upcoming change in administration and continuing fiscal crisis without losing focus on our mission. Our plan is also aligned with the vision of the California Veterans Board: "To be recognized as one of the prime advocates for California veterans' rights and benefits."

Since the 19th Century, California has maintained an historic commitment to caring for veterans and their families. We are proud of our service to California's veterans, and through the adoption of this strategic plan, we reaffirm that commitment.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "R. Brautigan".

ROGER BRAUTIGAN
Secretary

Mission

To serve California's veterans and their families.

Vision

California veterans will live the highest quality of life with dignity and honor.

Core Values

- Respect for All
- Absolute Integrity
- Outstanding Service
- Commitment to Excellence
- A “Can Do” Spirit

Executive Summary

California has the largest number of veterans in the nation with almost 2 million calling the Golden State home. With their families, they make better than 10 percent of the state’s total population.

In support of California’s veterans and their families, the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (USDVA) invests more than \$6 billion in benefits and services in this state. The California Department of Veterans Affairs (CalVet) total budget in the current fiscal year is approximately \$420 million, of which \$229 million is General Fund. In addition, the department oversees a home loan portfolio worth more than \$1.5 billion that has served more than 400,000 veterans and their families since it was started in 1923.

Throughout the planning process, and in the drafting of the Strategic Plan, the CalVet team was guided by the knowledge that organizations that plan for the future will successfully address their organizational requirements and the needs and desires that impact the quality of life of their customers, stakeholders and partners. In developing this plan, we focused and addressed the following questions:

- How will CalVet meet and exceed the expectations of California’s veterans and their families today and in the future?
- How will CalVet address the challenges of meeting the needs of both an aging veteran population, and those of newer veterans?
- How will CalVet measure and report organizational performance?
- How will CalVet translate organizational performance results into priorities for continuous service-delivery improvement and into opportunities for innovation?

Programs

In order to respond to those questions, CalVet needed to focus its goals and directions for the next five years. The CalVet team identified the department's three core programs:

- The provision of services and advocacy on behalf of veterans before the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs through the **Veteran Services Division** and the Deputy Secretary for **Women and Minority Veterans**, and the Assistant Secretary for **Native American Veterans**
- The administration of outstanding state veterans homes that provide a continuum of care for veterans who choose to live in those homes through the **Homes Division**
- The administration of a financially strong and economically successful housing program for veterans and their families through the **Farm and Home Loan Division**

The other divisions, while important to the overall success of the Department, are there to support and ensure the three programmatic divisions: the Homes Division, the Farm and Home Loan Division, and the Veteran Services Division, successfully achieve their mission. The support divisions include:

- **Legal Division**, which provides legal services, representation and advice to the operational divisions;
- **Administrative Services**, which provides administrative services including financial services, information technology, human resources, capital development, and facilities management;
- **Legislation and Communication**, which provides advice and guidance for dealing with the Legislature, the media and the general public.

Each of these support divisions has their own strategies to support the programmatic divisions in achieving their goals.

Strategic Goals

Once the Team identified the core functions, it narrowed the scope of the strategic goals to one preeminent goal for each Division. Those goals are:

- **Services for Veterans**, *Veteran Services Division* – Provide high quality advocacy and services for all California Veterans and to increase the percentage of veterans in California who receive USDVA compensation and pension benefits to at least the national average by 2014.
- **Long Term Care for Veterans**, *Veterans Homes Division* – Achieve a CMS Five-Star quality rating by 2014 for all the Division's Veterans Homes, and improve current rating by at least one level by 2011.
- **Housing for Veterans**, *Farm and Home Loan Division* – Provide outstanding customer service and wise financial planning that results in a profit each fiscal year and will achieve a AAA rating for the Division's General Obligation bonds from two of the rating agencies by 2014 and improve the current rating by at least one level by 2011.

Strategic Goals

The CalVet Strategic Plan describes the principle goal for each division within the Department, along with a summary of the supporting strategies for achieving those goals. To further detail the goals and strategies, the CDVA Business Plan specifies in greater detail each Division's objectives, plans of action, and timelines for those strategies. The CDVA Strategic Plan and Business Plan contain all the necessary information regarding strategic planning for all Divisions—there is no need for individual strategic plans at the divisional or home level.

This section lists the principle strategic goal for each of the core CalVet Divisions: Veteran Services, Veteran Homes, and Farm and Home Loans. For detailed descriptions of the strategies and objectives, including timelines for reaching the goals, refer to the CDVA Business Plan.

Services for Veterans

This section describes the strategic goals for the divisions providing services for veterans.

Veterans Services Division

Primary goal:

Provide high quality advocacy and services for all California Veterans and to increase the percentage of veterans in California who receive USDVA compensation and benefits to at least the national average by 2014.

How we get there:

The Department will make better connections between the veterans, their families and the benefits they have earned through their service in the military by:

- Advocating for veteran benefits, promoting participation by veterans in obtaining their benefits, and promoting coordinated efforts by various veteran organizations.
- Providing high quality veteran claims representation.
- Improving processes related to county veteran services office operations.
- Increasing the number of Veterans Courts statewide.
- Becoming a national model for State Cemetery operations

Women and Minority Veterans Affairs

How we get there:

The Department will improve the connections between women and minority veterans, their families and the benefits they have earned through their service in the military by:

- Expanding outreach activities to veterans specifically focusing on women and minority veterans.
- Developing and conducting appropriate advocacy activities that will target women and minority veterans.
- Educating women and minority veterans regarding earned benefits and available services.

Native American Veterans Affairs*How we get there:*

The Department will improve the connections between Native American veterans, their families and the benefits they have earned through their service in the military by:

- Expanding outreach activities to Native American veterans, their families, and dependents.
- Collaborating, improving, and coordinating communication with Native Americans.

Enhancing leadership role to advocate for and provide benefits for Native Americans.

Long Term Care for Veterans

This section describes the principle strategic goal for the division that provides long-term care for veterans in the state's Veterans Homes.

Veterans Homes Division*Primary goal:*

Achieve a Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) Five-Star quality rating by 2014 for all Veterans Homes, and improve current rating by at least one level by 2011.

How we get there:

Through strict adherence to regulatory standards, applying the principle of best practices, and the utilization of multidisciplinary reviews, the division will ensure that veterans who choose to live in our state veterans homes will receive the highest standard of care possible. This effort will be monitored through:

- Policy Alignment: Develop and align policies into a system that will facilitate Five-Star quality health care. Develop an audit program to validate policy compliance.
- Process Alignment: Redesign and standardize MDS, admissions, and forms processes to maximize efficiency and effectiveness and to meet regulatory, safety, and pay-for-performance standards and to ensure value and resident satisfaction.
- Best Programs and Practices: Develop, align, and manage best programs and practices and validate their effectiveness to ensure that anticipated benefits in patient care are realized.
- Standardize reimbursement processes: Capture all appropriate reimbursements from Medicare, Medi-Cal, VA, private insurance, etc. Validate electronic processes. Maximize programs and outside medical contracts for value and benefits to residents.
- Staffing and Productivity Analysis: Define staffing, productivity and patient/resident acuity standards. Develop audit controls to ensure that employees and departments meet the standards and stay cost effective.
- Standardize Education: Develop and implement enterprise-wide standards for education content, delivery, and learning.
- Information Integrity: Develop audit controls to ensure that essential system-wide information (electronic and hardcopy) is accurate, verifiable, meaningful and appropriately accessible and helps to improve the quality of care and to achieve the Five-Star CMS rating.

All of these efforts will lead to the development of appropriate division-wide staffing standards and organizational structures that will ensure successful, efficient operations that provide the highest quality of care.

Housing for Veterans

This section describes the principle strategic goal for the division providing housing for veterans through low-interest rate loans for homes and/or farms.

Farm and Home Division

Primary goal:

Realize a profit every year and achieve a AAA bond rating from two of the rating agencies by 2014 for Division's General Obligation bonds and improve current rating by at least one level by 2011.

How we get there:

By realizing a profit every year and achieving the highest bond rating of AAA for the CalVet Farm and Home Loan General Obligation Bonds the department will be able to offer veterans, and their families, lower interest rate loans. Attaining a AAA rating is based upon evaluations of multiple factors in how the Division operates and is managed. There are four strategies we will implement that will positively impact those evaluations.

- Increase overall market share in area of veterans loans.
- Manage the program in a fiscally responsible manner.
- Improve overall customer and support services.
- Improved staff effectiveness.

Administration and Support

The divisions providing administration and support for CDVA's programs include the Administrative Services Division, the Legislation and Communications Division, and the Legal Division. The common primary strategy of these Divisions in support of reaching the three programmatic Divisions' strategic goals is to:

Primary Goal:

Provide exceptional customer service that enables the programs to attain their goals.

The specific objectives for each of the sub-divisions within these administration and support divisions are detailed in the CDVA Business Plan.

Program Descriptions

Veterans Services Division

The Veterans Services Division administers all programs not directly related to Veterans Homes or the CalVet loan program. The division has offices in Sacramento (Headquarters), Oakland, Los Angeles and San Diego, and veteran claims representatives at each of the Veterans Homes of California in Barstow, Chula Vista and Yountville.

Products and Services

The division administers or supports several state sponsored benefits for veterans and their families including:

- Veteran Claims – Collaboratively, with County Veterans Service Offices (CVSO), the division provides assistance to veterans and their dependents in preparing and submitting claims and in representing or assisting claimants in dealing with federal, state and local agencies providing veterans benefits.
- College Tuition Fee Waiver
- Property Tax Exemptions
- Disabled Veteran License Plates
- Free License Plates for certain veterans
- Fishing and Hunting License Discounts
- Employment and Unemployment Insurance Assistance
- State Parks and Recreation Pass
- Business License, Tax and Fee Waivers

Note: All benefits are subject to eligibility requirements.

The division administers the following programs:

- Disabled Veteran Business Enterprise Program (DVBE) – State law established a Disabled Veteran Business Enterprise Program in which state agencies have a goal to expend not less than 3% of their annual contracts with DVBE firms. With the establishment of the three percent goal, the Legislature sought to ensure that disabled veteran business owners

had an opportunity for full participation in the State's economy while at the same time fostering increased competition in the marketplace.

- **Veteran Cemeteries** – The Northern California Veterans Cemetery (NCVC) in Shasta County is the first state-owned and operated veterans cemetery in California. The cemetery serves the veteran population in 18 Northern California counties and provides sufficient burial space for more than 20 years. Any eligible veteran, along with spouses and eligible dependents, may be interred at the cemetery. There is a small cemetery at the Yountville Veterans Home, but interment is limited to residents at the home.
- **Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund** – The fund provides maintenance of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial supported by donations from the general public.
- **California Veterans Memorial Registry** – The division supports the California Veterans Memorial Registry by acting as the point-of-contact for veterans or their families to submit individual biographical data for inclusion in the registry.
- **California Memorial Registry** – State statute requires CDVA to establish and maintain a registry of veteran memorials throughout the State. The registry currently identifies more than 400 veterans memorials throughout the State. The registry may be accessed through the Internet at www.cdva.ca.gov.

Women and Minority Veterans Affairs

Similar to the Veterans Services Division, the Office of Women and Minority Veterans Affairs administers all programs not directly related to Veterans Homes or the CalVet loan program but specifically targets its efforts to the women veterans and veterans from ethnic minorities. The Office is located at the Sacramento Headquarters in the Secretary's Office.

Products and Services

In partnership with the Veterans Services Division, the Deputy Secretary for Women and Minority Veterans provides the same level of services and advocacy as the larger services division outlined above. In addition, the office provides outreach through the department's women veteran registry and through its quarterly news letter for women and minority veterans. The office also sponsors an annual Women Veterans Conference that provides networking opportunities, information about services and benefits and work shop for those women veterans who need assistance.

Native American Veterans Affairs

Similar to the Veterans Services Division, the Office of Native American Veterans Affairs administers all programs not directly related to Veterans Homes or the CalVet loan program but specifically targets its efforts to Native Americans. The Office is located at the Sacramento Headquarters in the Secretary's Office.

Products and Services

In partnership with the Veterans Services Division, the Assistant Secretary of Native American Veterans Affairs provides the same level of services and advocacy as the larger services division outlined earlier. In addition, the office provides outreach to the Native American community through events and communications such as a newsletter.

State Veterans Homes Division

California's Veterans Homes provide California veterans with a living environment that protects their dignity and contributes to their feeling of self-reliance and self-worth. The Department operates the Veterans Homes of California in Yountville, Barstow and Chula Vista. California opened three new Veterans Home this past year in Lancaster, Ventura, West Los Angeles, and broke ground on two others one in Fresno, and one in Redding.

The Homes provide affordable health care for residents, and are certified by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs and licensed by the California Department of Health Services for Skilled Nursing and/or Intermediate Care (as appropriate), and by the California Department of Social Services for Residential Care For the Elderly (assisted living). Along with Domiciliary (independent living), the Homes provide four levels-of-care and continuity of treatment for residents who need to move from one level of care to another when medically necessary.

The Homes Division is in the middle of a major construction project right now, with two new homes currently under construction, one in Fresno and one in Redding. These two new homes along with the three opened this past year, will nearly double the capacity of the state's Veterans Homes System

Products and Services

Continuum of Long Term Care

The Homes Division's Continuum of Long Term Care model gives residents care and support during the changes that occur with aging, disability, or illness, including physical and cognitive decline. The goal for each individual is to live at his or her highest level of independence for as long as possible. The Continuum offers a range of care and living options from private, or semi-private, domiciliary residences up to Skilled Nursing Facilities, including Memory Care living. Health care is provided by on-site physicians and case managers. For more complex treatment or diagnosis, referrals are made to medical specialists, hospitals in the community or with the United States Department of Veterans Affairs.

The Department is also planning to provide Adult Day Care services to veterans who reside near the Homes in Lancaster and Ventura. If those veterans decline to the point that day care services can no longer meet their needs, the veteran can apply for admission to one of the Homes that offers 24-hour care. Once admitted to a Veterans Home, the veteran will benefit from the continuum of service throughout his or her life.

Levels of Care Services

Domiciliary Care: This is also known as "Dom" or independent living. It is offered at three of California's Veterans Homes, Yountville, Chula Vista and Barstow. Domiciliary Care provides basic services like meals, medical appointments, dental care, social activities and counseling. The assistance provided to residents at this level of care is minimal compared to the higher levels of care listed below.

Residential Care Facility for the Elderly (RCFE): This is often referred to as "Assisted Living." It is for those who need some supervised care, access to medical care, socialization, and recreational activities. RCFE is designed to be one of the points of entry for veterans to the Continuum of Long Term Care services. The services offered at an RCFE focus on safety and

provide some assistance with every day living activities. Such assistance may include a) help with shopping and banking, b) access to pharmacy and reminders to take daily medications, c) preparation of food and, d) transportation to medical and dental services, rehabilitation services and recreational activities. RCFE services are offered at the Homes in Yountville, Chula Vista, Lancaster, Ventura and West Los Angeles. When they open, the Homes in Redding and Fresno will also have RCFE.

Intermediate Care Facility (ICF): This level of service is provided to those who need a little more assistance with daily activities such as bathing, dressing or possibly some assistance with mobility, but their needs do not rise to the level of care where they need full skilled nursing services. The ICF services are offered at the Barstow and Yountville Homes.

Skilled Nursing Facility (SNF): This level of care provides access to inpatient medical evaluations and skilled nursing services, 24 hours per day, 7 days per week. The SNF care areas include psychiatric services, rehabilitation care, therapeutic activities and access to emergency medical care. Veterans eligible for this level of care are mentally and, or, physically dependent due to disability or disease. Residents may advance to this level of care from the ICF, RCFE or Domiciliary Units. SNF services are offered at the Yountville, Barstow, and Chula Vista Homes and will be offered at the West Los Angeles, Redding and Fresno Homes.

Dementia Care (or Memory Care): At the RCFE level, residents or applicants must be diagnosed with early dementia and have no history of significant behavioral or safety problems. Along with a range of health care and social programs, perimeter monitoring is provided for safety. When the dementia becomes more advanced, the resident will be transferred to a higher level of care in one of the SNF dementia units at either West Los Angeles or Yountville. The Fresno and Redding Homes will also have Dementia care.

Adult Day Health Care (ADHC): These services will be available at the Lancaster and Ventura Homes sometime in the future. The ADHC program is an outpatient program that will provide veterans with daytime services appropriate to their needs. These may include medical support and rehabilitation, physical examinations, medications management, rehabilitation therapy, psychosocial counseling, dietary services (lunch and snacks) with nutrition monitoring and recreation and socialization—programs which are typically found in a SNF. Transportation to and from the facility will also be provided. The goal of the ADHC program is to maintain or improve the health and functional status of the veteran and to support the caregivers who will continue to provide care at home. ADHC programs may assist residents in obtaining home-based assessments, chore services and family counseling.

CalVet Home Loan Program

The Department began making low interest rate farm and home loans following the enactment by the California Legislature of the Veterans Farm and Home Purchase Act of 1921. In 1943, the Legislature enacted the Veterans Farm and Home Purchase Act of 1943, which modified the program to meet new needs of veterans. The Veterans Farm and Home Purchase Act of 1974 superseded the 1943 Act and once again modified the program. The 1943 Act established the 1943 Fund in the State Treasury, which is the principle fund utilized by the Program.

Since its inception, the goal of the California Veterans Board and CDVA has been to make CalVet the loan of choice for California veterans. The Program has assisted over 417,000 veterans to purchase farms and homes throughout the State as a benefit to recognize their personal sacrifice

and service to state and country. Funds used to finance the purchases are raised through the sale of Revenue Bonds and Veterans General Obligation Bonds.

Program administration is located in Sacramento (Headquarters). The Division currently maintains six CalVet Offices throughout the State. They are located in Bakersfield, Fresno, Redding, Riverside, Sacramento, and San Diego.

Products and Services

The Department finances new and existing single-family homes, farms, condominiums and mobile homes on land owned by the veteran or in rental parks by acquiring property selected by the veteran and reselling the property to the veteran under a land sale contract. Under a Contract of Purchase, the veteran holds an equitable interest, and the Department holds legal title to the property. The Department also provides Home Improvement Loans, Construction Loans and Conditional Commitment (Rehabilitation) Loans.

Subsequent loans are available to any veteran who qualifies under the Veterans Code and the Federal Tax Code so long as any previous loan has been paid-in-full or the veteran lost his/her interest in the previous loan through divorce or dissolution of marriage. A veteran must meet qualifications established under State law in the Military and Veterans Code in order to be eligible for the program. These qualifications are subject to change by the Legislature.

Three types of loan funds are available for the Program:

- ***“Qualified Veterans Mortgage Bond Proceeds”*** (QVMB), are derived from proceeds of Veterans General Obligation Bonds. This source is used to finance loans for veterans who served on active duty, who qualify under provisions of the Military and Veterans Code as a wartime era veteran, and who were released from active duty less than 25 years from loan application. These funds can only be used to finance loans for eligible wartime veterans.
- ***“Qualified Mortgage Bond Proceeds”*** (QMB), are derived from Revenue Bond proceeds. These funds are used to finance loans for any veteran who qualifies under the Veterans Code (including peace-time veterans) and meets certain requirements (Federal limitations) in regards to family income, purchase price, and previous home ownership.
- ***“Unrestricted Moneys”*** (URM), are derived from certain moneys in the 1943 Fund, certain proceeds of pre-Ullman Revenue Bonds and Veterans General Obligation Bonds, and certain future issues of taxable bonds, if any. This source is used to finance loans for earlier war veterans, Vietnam Era veterans, and recent war veterans who do not qualify for other funding sources. These funds can only be used to make loans to veterans and ultimately to satisfy outstanding bond debt.